

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9382

C O N F I D E N T I A L 15083

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, PINS, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS ADDRESSES AFP

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN AFP DAY ADDRESS DECEMBER 21, MARCOS EMPHASIZED CIVILIAN CONTROL AND CIVIL RESPONSIBILITY OF AFP. WHILE MARCOS NOT PLEASED AT MILITARY ABRASIVENESS, WE INTERPRET REMARKS AS PRIMARILY DIRECTED AT AFP IMAGE RATHER THAN AT DIMINISHING THEIR KEY SUPPORT ROLE. MARCOS RE-EMPHASIZED HIS NEED FOR MILITARY IN AWARDING MEDALS TO STALWART TWELVE WHO HE SAID PLANNED MARTIAL LAW. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPARTING FROM HIS PRACTICE OF THE LAST TWO YEARS, MARCOS DID NOT HEAP BENEFITS AND PROMOTIONS ON THE MILITARY DURING HIS DECEMBER 21 AFP DAY ADDRESS. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION THE ARMED FORCES HAVE MADE TO THE NEW SOCIETY, MARCOS DEVOTED MOST OF HIS REMARKS TO EMPHASIZING CIVILIAN CONTROL AND THE CIVIL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOLDIER AND APPEARED TO BE ATTEMPTING TO REDEFINE THEIR ROLE AT LEAST FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION. UNDERSCORING THIS RETURN TO NORMALCY THEME, MARCOS DWELLED ON THE TRANSFER OF A LARGE NUMBER OF CASES FROM THE JURISDICTION OF THE MILITARY TRIBUNALS TO THE CIVIL COURT. COMMENT: MARCOS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY LIKE TO SEE AN AFP MORE POPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE AND PERFORMING IN A WAY WHICH GAINS RATHER THAN LOSES

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SUPPORT FOR THE AFP AND ULTIMATELY FOR HIS LEADERSHIP. HE

IS ALSO SENSITIVE TO IMPORTANCE OF LESSENING MILITARY IMAGE OF HIS GOVERNMENT. BUT HIS CHASTISEMENT OF MILITARY ELITISM SHOULD NOT BE READ, AS AP HAS SUGGESTED IN REPORT, AS ATTEMPT TO DIMINISH KEY ROLE OF AFP BUT TO REFURBISH ITS IMAGE IN CHARACTERISTIC FILIPINO FASHION.

2. IN CASE ANY DOUBT OF HIS ULTIMATE GOOD WILL HAD BEEN CREATED AMONG THE UNIFORMED AUDIENCE, MARCOS CHOSE TO DECORATE THE TWELVE MEN OF DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS INSTRUMENTAL IN DECIDING AND IMPLEMENTING MARTIAL LAW. THIS MARKED THE FIRST TIME WHEN THESE INDIVIDUALS (JUAN PONCE ENRILE, GENERAL ROMEO ESPINO, MG RAFAEL ZAGALA, MG FIDEL RAMOS, MG JOSE RANCUDO, REAR ADM. H.M. RUIZ, MG FAVIAN VER, BG TOMAS DIZA, BG ALFREDO MONTOYA, BG IGNACIO PAZ, COL. R.G. GATAN AND LTC. EDUARDO COJUANGCO) HAD BEEN PUBLICLY SINGLED OUT AND THANKED FOR THEIR ROLE. COMMENT: THE TWELVE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN REWARDED AND IDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALLY IN PRIVATE DURING SEPTEMBER 1973 MALACANANG CEREMONIES WHEN MARCOS PRESENTED EACH OF THEM WITH A PERSONALLY INSCRIBED GOLD WATCH LEADING THEM SUBSEQUENTLY TO TITLE THEMSELVES "THE OMEGA BAND." HE REFERRED TO THEM EN GROS DURING HIS 1973 AFP ADDRESS BUT WITHOUT IDENTIFICATION. THERE IS NO QUESTION NOW THAT THEIR FORTUNES ARE EVEN MORE TIGHTLY TIED TO THOSE OF THE NEW SOCIETY.

3. A FINAL VIGNETTE OF THE DAY OCCURRED WHEN MRS. MARCOS WAS CALLED FORWARD TO ACCEPT A SPECIAL MILITARY AWARD, SIGNED BY HER LEAST FAVORITE CABINET MEMBER, SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE JUAN PONCE ENRILE, FOR HER OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW SOCIETY. WHETHER THIS WAS AN ATTEMPT AT A PUBLIC RECONCILIATION (OBSERVERS COMMENTED SHE LOOKED SINCERELY SURPRISED) OR WAS MERELY ANOTHER STAGE MANAGED EVENT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
SULLIVAN

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